

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 21-23, without prejudice or disclaimer. The following is a complete listing of claims and replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application:

Claims 1-17 (canceled).

Claim 18 (previously presented): A method for controlling an image processing system having a plurality of devices connected with each other via a communication path including a plurality of channels, said method comprising:

a reserving step, of reserving a plurality of channels;

a first communicating step, of storing read image data to a hard disk storage and communicating the image data stored in the hard disk storage using a part of the plurality of channels;

a second communicating step, of, without storing the read image data to the hard disk storage, communicating the read image data using a part of the plurality of channels, wherein the number of channels used in the second communicating step exceeds the number of channels used in said first communicating step;

a receiving step, of receiving a channel request; and

a step of, when the channel request is received in said receiving step upon communicating in said second communicating step, re-assigning a part of unused channels in the

plurality of channels if a number of requested channels does not exceed the number of unused channels, and communicating in said first communication step so as to increase a number of channels to be used for re-assigning of channels if a number of the requested channels exceeds the number of unused channels,

wherein the image data is communicated in either said first communicating step or said second communicating step.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A method for controlling an image processing system having a plurality of devices connected with each other via a communication path including a plurality of channels, said method comprising:

a reserving step, of reserving a plurality of channels;

a first communicating step, of reducing read image data and communicating the reduced image data using a part of the plurality of channels;

a second communicating step, of, without reducing the read image data, communicating the read image data using a part of the plurality of channels, wherein the number of channels used in the second communicating step exceeds the number of channels used in said first communicating step;

a receiving step, of receiving a channel request; and

a step of, when the channel request is received in said receiving step upon communicating in said second communicating step, re-assigning a part of unused channels in the plurality of channels if a number of requested channels does not exceed the number of unused

channels, and communicating in said first communication step so as to increase a number of channels to be used for re-assigning of channels if a number of the requested channels exceeds the number of unused channels,

wherein the image data is communicated in either said first communicating step or said second communicating step.

Claim 20 (previously presented): A method for controlling an image processing system having a plurality of devices connected with each other via a communication path including a plurality of channels, said method comprising:

a reserving step, of reserving a plurality of channels;

a first communicating step, of compressing read image data and communicating the compressed image data using a part of the plurality of channels;

a second communicating step, of, without compressing the read image data, communicating the read image data using a part of the plurality of channels, wherein the number of channels used in the second communicating step exceeds the number of channels used in said first communicating step;

a receiving step, of receiving a channel request; and

a step of, when the channel request is received in said receiving step upon communicating in said second communicating step, re-assigning a part of unused channels in the plurality of channels if a number of requested channels does not exceed the number of unused channels, and communicating in said first communication step so as to increase a number of

channels to be used for re-assigning of channels if a number of the requested channels exceeds the number of unused channels,

wherein the image data is communicated in either said first communicating step or said second communicating step.

Claims 21-23 (canceled).